

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of **Warboys Parish Council** held on 9th August 2021 at the Parish Centre, Warboys.

PRESENT

Councillor Dr S C Withams, Chairman.

Councillors Mrs J M Cole, R J Dykstra, D W England, Ms L A Gifford, S J Green, Mrs M H Harlock, J A Parker, R A Payne, P S Potts, Mrs C L Sproats, G C M Willis and Mrs A R Wyatt

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

County Councillor S J Corney,
District Councillor M W Haines.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs C Evans and Mrs S J Wilcox and District Councillor G J Bull.

60/21 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Further to Minute No. 43/21/(a), the Chairman drew attention to the fact that the Council's Book of Condolence was available at the meeting if Members wished to record a message in memory of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh who had passed away earlier in the year.

The Chairman also mentioned that the much delayed annual gathering of Members and employees which normally took place before the December meeting of the Council would take place prior to the next meeting in September.

61/21 MINUTES

Upon being moved by Councillor Potts and seconded by Councillor Parker, the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th July 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

62/21 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest had been received in respect of matters appearing on the agenda.

(Councillor England arrived at the meeting at this point in the proceedings.)

63/21 MATTERS ARISING

The Council considered the following matters arising from the meeting held on 12th July 2021:-

(a) 66 High Street

Further to Minute No. 43/21(b), Members' attention was drawn to the submission of a planning application to convert 66 High Street into flats and develop the site by the conversion of the former bakehouse into a house and the building of two new semi-detached dwellings. The application would be considered by the Planning Committee at the conclusion of the Council meeting.

(b) Bellway Homes

Further to Minute No. 43/21(c), the Clerk reported that he had still not received an answer from Bellway Homes in respect of the queries outstanding in terms of a gate, path surfacing and play equipment at Jubilee Park.

With regard to the blockages in the underground sections of the ditch at the rear of Madecroft taking drainage water from the new development, the Clerk reported that he had been informed by the County Council's Sustainable Drainage Officer that discussions were ongoing with a property owner in Madecroft as to responsibility for the repairs required. The County Council's Highways Division had confirmed that they would repair the further damage to the pipe downstream beneath the lay-by in Mill Green.

(c) Sports Holiday Club Proposal

Further to Minute No. 43/21(d), the Clerk reported that Members had been invited to visit the sports holiday club to be held at Warboys Primary Academy in the week commencing 16th August. Arrangements were being made to find a suitable date for those interested in attending to visit together to avoid undue disturbance to the activities being undertaken by the children.

(d) Bridleways

Further to Minute No. 43/21(e), Members were informed that no further progress had been made since the previous meeting with the County Farms Estate regarding the proposed linking of bridleways 17 and 18. County Councillor Corney had offered to assist in contacting County Farms to expedite consideration of the matter and the Clerk undertook to supply him with the necessary details.

(e) Damage to Shelter

Arising from Minute No. 43/21(j), the Clerk reported that he had been notified by BT that they could find no evidence of a BT vehicle visiting their exchange near the Jubilee Clock Tower when the roof of the shelter owned by the Council had been damaged by a vehicle reversing into the site. As the incident had been observed by the occupier of a neighbouring property, the Clerk indicated that he

would continue to pursue the matter with BT but that it was looking unlikely that BT would accept liability for the repairs.

(f) Traffic Routes Around St Ives

Arising from Minute No. 48/21, the Clerk reported that he had received a reply from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority explaining that there would be further opportunities in the future to comment on any proposals to alleviate traffic congestion around St Ives.

(g) The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Further to Minute No. 52/21, the Clerk reported receipt of information from the Community Association regarding their plans for events in the village over the period of 2nd to 5th June to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Councillor Mrs Wyatt explained that the Association were keen to work with the Council to organise an extensive programme of activities and the Clerk indicated that he would arrange for a meeting of the working party established by the Council at its previous meeting.

(h) Parish Centre Replacement

Further to Minute No. 54/21, the Clerk reported that bat surveys of the area around the existing Parish Centre had been undertaken by Greenwillows both in daylight hours and dusk and no evidence of bats had been found.

The Architects had been asked for an update on the current situation in terms of the redevelopment and Members would be updated on the situation when the information had been received.

(i) Purchase of Land Adjoining the A141

Further to Minute No. 59/21, the Clerk provided a progress report on the acquisition of the land adjoining the A141 by the Council and advised that he anticipated that contracts would be exchanged shortly with the Council being required to pay a 10% deposit at that time with the balance due on completion.

Members were also informed that the County Council's Highways Project Manager had agreed to a site meeting to discuss the crossing of the A141 with County Councillor Corney and the Clerk which would be arranged shortly.

64/21 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 12th July 2021 be received.

65/21 POLICE REPORT

Members were informed that Cambridgeshire Police had ceased providing their weekly update of criminal activity in the local area in July, although they had indicated that they hoped to resume in the autumn. The Clerk advised that statistics for the Parish were difficult to obtain from the Police website, although the Police had advised that the public could keep in touch through social media channels.

There were no issues that Members wished to raise in terms of criminal behaviour in the Parish over the past month.

66/21 REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Corney and District Councillor Haines reported on recent matters of interest at their respective authorities.

Councillor Corney reported on the number of staff leaving the County Council's employment recently which had left many vacancies. Work was proceeding on the development of the County Council's new headquarters at Alconbury Weald and it was anticipated that staff would be vacating Shirehall to move to the new premises in September.

Councillor Haines reported that he and Councillor Bull had met the owner of 66 High Street to discuss the latter's proposals to refurbish the building and he had also met the District Council's Conservation Team Leader who was dealing with the listed building. Councillor Haines also reported that he had visited a resident in Ramsey Road arising from complaints about excessive traffic speeds and he advised that he would draw her attention to the activities of the newly reconstituted Speedwatch team in Warboys.

67/21 GREENER FUTURES

Members received the notes of the liaison group meeting with representatives of Greener Futures held on 13th July 2021, copies of which had been circulated.

68/21 SPEEDWATCH SIGNS

Further to Minute No. 49/21, Councillor Green reiterated his request for Members to consider the purchase of six Community Speedwatch signs at a cost of approximately £88 each for installation at suitable locations at the entrances into Warboys, the intention being to advise motorists that Speedwatch was operating in the village.

Since the previous meeting, the Police Speedwatch Co-ordinator had established from the County Council that an application for the installation of the signs through the Privately Financed Local Highway route would not incur the normal non-refundable fee of £500. Instead, this would be dealt with as a minor highway improvement, although the County Council would still charge for the installation of the signs. This would be dependent on the location of the signs and whether additional posts were required but an estimate of cost would be provided before a final decision had to be taken.

After a vote had been taken, it was

RESOLVED

that the Clerk be requested to submit an application to the County Council to ascertain the cost of installing six Speedwatch signs at the various entrances to the village.

69/21 PLAYGROUND SAFETY REPORTS

Further to the Minutes of the meeting of the Leisure Areas Committee held on 28th June 2021, a report (copies of which had been circulated) was submitted by the Clerk on the maintenance/replacement of playground equipment following the annual safety inspections by PlaySafety. Summaries of the responses received from Caloo Ltd and Wicksteed Leisure were contained in the report or in subsequent correspondence by the Clerk.

Having considered the responses from Caloo, Members were satisfied that no further action was required in the case of the queries raised by the safety inspector about the safety surfacing under the multi-unit climber and a suggested barrier on the embankment slide at Adams Lyons Playground. Caloo had advised that disassembling the cableway to test the cable where it wasn't visible inside the framework could lead to further problems but that this issue was increasingly being raised by safety inspectors. The cost of the inspection work would be £495 plus VAT.

The Council's insurers had agreed that the damage to the musical chimes was covered by the Council's policy with them but they had queried the cost of replacement equipment from Caloo and had asked that an alternative quote be obtained. Members were of the opinion that the equipment was well used by children and the Clerk was asked to obtain an alternative quotation for its replacement.

Quotations had been supplied by Wicksteed Leisure for the installation of safety matting for the horse springer and seesaw at Adams Lyons playground to prevent ground erosion and the removal of the pick-up-sticks unit and its replacement with a range of options at Jubilee Park.

The Clerk drew attention to complaints from the occupiers of neighbouring properties at both playgrounds about overhanging trees and reported that he and Councillor Willis would be undertaking a site visit in the week following the meeting. Members' attention also was drawn to a complaint from the occupier of a property in Farriers Way concerning the disturbance being caused by older children gathering in Jubilee Park in an evening. The resident had suggested the relocation of the play equipment elsewhere, the installation of gates which were locked each evening to prevent access or the sale of the park to neighbours to enable them to extend their gardens.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that no further action be taken with regard to the multi-unit climber and embankment slide at Adams Lyons playground;

- (b) that the quotation from Caloo for the dismantling and safety inspection of the cableway at a cost of £495 plus VAT be accepted;
- (c) that the quotation from Wicksteed Leisure for grass matting for the seesaw and horse springer at Adams Lyons at a cost of £628 plus VAT be accepted;
- (d) that Wicksteed Leisure be requested to supply a quotation for the replacement of the musical chimes at Adams Lyons;
- (e) that the Clerk be requested to try to obtain a grant towards the cost of the removal of the pick-up-sticks unit at Jubilee Park and its replacement with another item of equipment;
- (f) that the Clerk and Councillor Willis be requested to report back after their site visits to investigate the complaints about boundary trees at the playgrounds; and
- (g) that the complaint regarding disturbances by older children at Jubilee Park be noted and the Clerk requested to send a suitable reply.

70/21 GRASSCUTTING

Councillor England reported that he had requested that the item be placed on the agenda and proceeded to express concern over the standard of grasscutting at Adams Lyons playground by the contractor currently engaged by the Council. The playground had not been cut for several weeks earlier in the summer which had resulted in the grass becoming very long. Although the situation had improved since that time, Councillor England drew attention to areas where the mowing had been patchy and strimming had not taken place around the play equipment.

The Clerk advised that he had contacted the contractor after the previous meeting. A company representative had apologised for the standard of maintenance which had been caused by equipment shortages. Members were reminded that a similar situation had occurred in 2020. Under the circumstances the Clerk was requested to check the length of the contract with the existing contractor and to invite quotations for grasscutting at Adams Lyons and Jubilee Park when it was due to expire.

71/21 FEAST WEEK VISIT BY FUNFAIR

A report was submitted by the Clerk (copies of which had been circulated) following the visit by the funfair to Warboys during Feast Week. Following the cancellation of the visit in 2020 due to the pandemic, arrangements had been made for the fairground rides and sideshows to return during Feast Week with parts of the High Street and Church Road closed early on Sunday morning in anticipation of their arrival.

Unfortunately, only some seven or eight attractions had arrived with the remainder unable to leave the sites where they had been operating in London due to flooding that had taken place over the weekend. Some of the operators who did arrive had felt that it was not worthwhile remaining for the duration of the road closure and had left on the Tuesday. The

absence of attractions had then led to motorists failing to observe the road closure and several bollards had been damaged beyond repair by a heavy goods vehicle which had driven through the diversion without stopping.

Under the circumstances, Members were invited to consider whether to continue with the visits by the funfair during Feast Week as no right for them to attend could be established. Members were also asked whether the usual administration charge for the road closure should be made this year.

Members were of the opinion that the visit was a long-established tradition in Warboys which many would miss if it was discontinued. It was therefore

RESOLVED

- (a) that arrangements continue to be made for the funfair to occupy the High Street during Feast Week and the Clerk requested to liaise with the representative of the showmen to encourage a greater number of attractions in future years; and
- (b) that the administration charge be waived for the current year as the failure of many attractions to arrive had been due to circumstances beyond their control.

72/21 TIMEBANK

A report (copies of which had been circulated) was submitted by the Timebank Co-ordinator on the activities undertaken and the work that she had carried out during the previous twelve months which had been affected by the pandemic lockdowns.

The Chairman reported that further information concerning the Timebank scheme would be provided later in the meeting under Minute No. 79/21.

73/21 LOCAL HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEME 2022/23

A report was submitted by the Clerk (copies of which had been circulated) following the invitation of bids by the County Council for funding under the Local Highways Improvement scheme for 2022/23.

Information was contained in the report about the completion of the work approved in the 2020/21 programme with one the gateways at the entrance to the village in Ramsey Road still not installed. Members were also reminded that the bid for further traffic calming in Ramsey Road in the 2021/22 programme had been unsuccessful as highway officers had maintained that the carriageway was too narrow for physical calming measures to be installed and there were too many junctions and accesses to properties to identify suitable locations.

The Clerk explained the process for the submission of bids with the maximum contribution that the County Council would make being limited to £15,000 and applicants required to make a minimum 10% contribution towards the cost. Only one bid could be made. The

report contained a summary of the highways issues considered by the Council over the past year, including the A141 crossing to access the land to be acquired by the Council, access to Adams Lyons playground in Church Road, complaints from the public about excessive traffic speeds in Ramsey Road, Fenton Road, Station Road, High Street, Humberdale Way and Mahaddie Way, a request for a footway to be provided at Puddock Hill, inadequate highway markings, the High Street/Mill Green junction and inadequate off-street parking at the SPAR Store and parking at the Primary Academy in Humberdale Way.

Members' attention was drawn to the decisions made at the special Council meeting held on 25th February 2021 for the implementation of measures contained in a risk assessment associated with the purchase of land adjoining the A141 (Minute No. 182/20 refers). This had included the recommendations of the traffic consultants engaged by the Council to improve the safety for members of the public accessing the land by crossing the A141 via public footpath 6.

RESOLVED

that a bid be submitted under the LHI programme for 2022/23 to implement the measures recommended by the traffic consultants engaged by the Council for the A141 crossing.

74/21 HOURS OF EMPLOYMENT OF THE CLERK

(The Clerk left the meeting for the duration of the following item.)

Further to Minute No 208/20, a report by the Clerk (copies of which had been circulated) was considered in accordance with the decision for him to report quarterly on the average number of hours he had worked. This had averaged 34 hours per week during the first quarter of the year compared with his contracted hours of 24 per week.

Members reiterated the need to address the position in terms of the Clerk's duties, the level of staffing required and the question of office accommodation. As the provision made in the design of the replacement Parish Centre for an office would not come to fruition until the premises had been constructed, Members requested that the possibility of a short term solution to be explored, possibly by use of the Parish Centre Meeting Room.

Following discussion and a vote being taken on the question of remuneration, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the report be noted and no further action taken prior to the end of the financial year with regard to the Clerk's remuneration; and
- (b) that the Clerk be requested to submit a report to the next meeting regarding his job specification and the implications of employing additional staffing resources.

75/21 OPEN FORUM

The Clerk reported on the matters raised at the Open Forum following the previous meeting of the Council. Councillor England had requested that an item be placed on the agenda for the following meeting regarding the standard of grasscutting which had been dealt with earlier in the meeting. Councillor Payne had asked if a hedge alongside the footpath at the side of The Weir could be cut back as this was impeding access by pedestrians. The Clerk reported that he had contacted the owner of the property and the work had been completed within a couple of days. Councillor Willis had drawn attention to the unsightly appearance of the site of the former SPAR Store which the Clerk reported he was continuing to pursue with the company.

76/21 ACCOUNTS

Upon being moved by Councillor Parker and seconded by Councillor Mrs Wyatt, it was

RESOLVED

(a) that the following accounts be approved:-

		£
M J Buddle	Salary – July 2021	1,109.55
W E Batterbee	Salary – July 2021	1,108.25
R Edwards	Salary – July 2021	312.80
R Reeves	Salary - July 2021	1,045.58
Mrs N Everett	Salary – July 2021	496.10
HMRC	Tax & NIC – July 2021	1,604.01
R Reeves	Reimbursement – Zoom subscription	14.39
R Reeves	Mileage claim	32.85
Vodafone	Mobile phone contract (Timebank) (paid by direct debit)	10.28
E.ON	Electricity supply - Parish Centre (paid by direct debit)	65.00
E.ON	Gas supply - Parish Centre (paid by direct debit)	20.70
Chess ICT Ltd.	IT support – July (paid by direct debit)	139.97
Allstar	Fuel (paid by direct debit)	19.98

Allstar	Fuel (paid by direct debit)	5.02
Allstar	Fuel (paid by direct debit)	52.50
Total Gas & Power	UMS 1 street lighting electricity supply – June	5.56
Total Gas & Power	UMS 3 street lighting electricity supply – June	4.94
GCM Group (East Anglia) Ltd	Grass cutting	918.00
Mrs L Jones	Reimbursement of allotment deposit	15.00
Leeds Day	Legal fees for land purchase	1,725.00
Mr J S Hixson & Mrs J A Hixson	Feast Week band concert (Brightside)	200.00
Ivan Barrett Ltd	Miscellaneous supplies	286.98
Mrs S Porter	Reimbursement of allotment deposit	25.00
Ramsey Builders Merchants	Varnish	24.00
R Reeves	Reimbursement – ink cartridges	69.97
Madingley Mulch	Play bark	371.00

(b) that payment of the following account prior to the meeting be endorsed:-

Morelock Signs Ltd	Traffic signs	182.64
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77/21 BUDGETARY CONTROL

The Council received the budgetary control statement for July 2021 together with the list of Parish Centre bookings for that month and the budgetary control report for the first quarter of the year, copies of which had been circulated to all Members.

78/21 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following item on the grounds that it contained information relating to employees of the Council.

79/21 PERSONNEL

The Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) following the resignation of the Senior Handyperson. Members discussed the future workload of the Handymen in view of the expansion of the village, the purchase of land adjoining the A141 and the replacement of the Parish Centre. In the short term however, the Clerk drew attention to the need to recruit a replacement as a matter of urgency to ensure that sufficient resources were available to carry out the tasks required.

The Chairman also drew attention to a letter of resignation that had been received since the despatch of the agenda from the Timebank Co-ordinator.

Decisions were made with regard to the filling of the position of Senior Handyperson and the Clerk was requested to submit a report on the future of the Timebank scheme in Warboys.

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed.

Chairman.